



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

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**ALLEGED 'CYBERSCAMMER' ARRESTED ON FEDERAL CHARGES OF USING  
DECEPTIVE INTERNET NAMES TO LEAD MINORS TO X-RATED SITES**

JAMES B. COMEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and WILLIAM E. KEZER, the Inspector in Charge of the New York Division of the United States Postal Inspection Service, announced today that JOHN ZUCCARINI, 53, was arrested in his Florida hotel room on charges arising from his alleged creation and use of misleading domain names on the Internet to deceive minors into logging on to pornographic Web sites. The activity allegedly brought ZUCCARINI as much as \$1 million a year.

According to the one-count Complaint unsealed today, ZUCCARINI, operating from a hotel in Hollywood, Florida, registered and used misleading domain names on the Internet in order to earn money by directing Internet users to Web sites which advertise for, among other things, pornography.

Specifically, as alleged in the Complaint, ZUCCARINI used various Internet registries to register domain names which

consist of misspellings of popular legitimate domain names. For example, ZUCCARINI registered the Internet domain name "WWW.DINSEYLAND.COM," which is a misspelling of "WWW.DISNEYLAND.COM," the legitimate domain name for an amusement park owned and operated by the Walt Disney Corporation. According to the Complaint, ZUCCARINI engaged in the practice of registering misleading domain names on a large scale - according to the Complaint, he registered at least 3,000 such misleading domain names. In addition, according to the Complaint, in many cases, ZUCCARINI registered multiple misspellings of the same legitimate domain name. For example, ZUCCARINI registered 16 misspellings and variations of the legitimate Website "BRITNEYSPEARS.COM," a Website owned and operated by "Britney Spears," a popular female singer. According to the Complaint, ZUCCARINI did this in order to ensure that every possible misspelling of that legitimate domain would cause Internet users to access advertising Web sites that pay ZUCCARINI for bringing viewers to their sites.

As described in the Complaint, many of the domain names ZUCCARINI registered are misspellings or variations of Web sites associated with entertainers, celebrities and cartoon characters that are popular with young children. For example, ZUCCARINI registered the domain name "WWW.BOBTHEBIULDER.COM" and "WWW.TELTUBBIES.COM" which are, respectively, misspellings of the Web sites for "Bob The Builder" and "Teletubbies," both of which are cartoon characters popular with children under 10 years of

age.

As detailed in the Complaint, investigation by the Postal Inspection Service revealed that if a person were to inadvertently access either "WWW.BOBTHEBIULDER.COM" or "WWW.TELTUBBIES.COM," the person would be presented with advertisements for free access to pornography; as described below, these advertisements included numerous high-quality images of hard-core pornography, including explicit photographs of young people engaging in sexual intercourse.

Specifically, on May 19 and May 20, 2003, investigators with the United States Postal Inspection Service in New York accessed the ZUCCARINI-controlled variations of the "Bob The Builder," "Britney Spears," "Disneyland," and "Teletubbies" Web sites discussed above. Upon accessing these ZUCCARINI-controlled sites, the investigator's computer was automatically directed to a Web page which, according to the domain name which appeared in the computer's browser, was known as "amaturevideos.nl."

Almost immediately thereafter, the investigator's computer was automatically redirected to another Web site; this Web site had the domain name "HANKY-PANKY-COLLEGE.com" (the "Hanky-Panky Site"). Further access of the Hanky-Panky Site by the investigator led to a Web page entitled "Dorm Sex Party." This Web page contained pictures of partially nude young people

engaging in sexual activity. The investigator's attempts to close this page by clicking on the "close" button of his computer screen did not close the page. Rather, it opened additional pages on the Hanky-Panky Site, including a Web page containing a collage comprised of several graphic pornographic pictures. Virtually all of the pornographic images observed by the investigator were advertisements for, among other things, free access to pornography.

The prosecution is the first of its kind to be brought under the Truth in Domain Names Act, which was enacted as part of the "Amber Alert" legislation.

In civil lawsuits brought against ZUCCARINI by private citizens whose domain names he has abused, ZUCCARINI admitted that one reason why he registered domain names of Web sites popular with children is because children are more likely than adults to make spelling errors and to mistype Web site addresses. In addition, in those civil lawsuits, ZUCCARINI admitted that he earned between \$.10 and \$.25 for every viewer who he brought to the Web sites which advertised for pornography, and admitted earning a total of as much as \$800,000 to \$1 million per year from his use of misleading domain names.

Mr. COMEY stated: "The defendant is accused of taking advantage of children's common mistakes, and using that to profit

by leading them by the hand into the seediest and most repugnant corners of cyberspace. His alleged actions are not clever but criminal."

Mr. KEZER stated: "This case is another example of emerging child exploitation crimes involving the use of the Internet. The defendant used misleading internet domain names to lure unsuspecting minors to sexually explicit internet sites, then profit from the advertisement revenues. The U.S. Postal Inspection Service, in partnership with the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, was pleased to capitalize on the new Truth in Domain Names Act, to protect the American public, in particular minors, from unsolicited pornographic materials."

As detailed in the Complaint, ZUCCARINI's activities in directing Internet users to Web Sites depicting pornography were the subject of numerous consumer complaints, lawsuits by legitimate domain name holders, and an enforcement action by the Federal Trade Commission for unfair and deceptive practices.

If convicted, ZUCCARINI faces a maximum sentence of 4 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Mr. COMEY praised the investigative efforts of the United States Postal Inspection Service, the Federal Trade Commission, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Division of Marketing

Practices, and the Department of Justice Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section.

Mr. COMEY said that the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorney JOSEPH V. De MARCO is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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